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GEN. LEW. WALLACE

—ON—

The Democratic Party and the Solid South.

SPEECH

—OF—

GEN. LEW. WALLACE

—ON—

The Democratic Party and the Solid South

Delivered on occasion of a Rally called by the Ben Hur Republican Club at Whitlock, Montgomery County, Indiana, October 23, 1888.

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The Democratic Party and the Solid South.

Fellow-Citizens—There is no office or nomination for office in your gift which I want. If then you ask what I am, and why here, this is my answer—I am an American of the class which believes our country the greatest that is or has been—the class which does not allow a day to pass without thanks for birth and life in the United States. There is no country like our country; and in anticipation of the election, the morning of which may be almost seen in the sky, I am here to speak for it regardlessly.

I wish to be brief, and for that purpose, after not a little thought, have determined to confine myself to one topic—the Democratic Party and the Solid South.

I was once a Democrat of the straitest sect. For thirteen years as a Democrat I made battle with every ism that showed a hostile pennon in the opposite horizon. Recollection of those years, and of the many who were my friends in that time, some of them now dead, will keep me in respectful speech. While indifferent to political honors, I beg you all to understand that I am a candidate for the good will and respect of everybody. I remember also that at giving consent to speak on this occasion, it was on condition that my old Democratic friends should be especially invited to come and hear me.

The origin of the Democratic party is not altogether clear in history. Thomas Jefferson is its reputed father. Let it be so held. There were Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Each nicknamed the other. The anti-Federalists called their opponents Aristocrats, and were in turn branded Jacobins. The Federalists disappeared with Aaron Burr; after which we hear certainly and distinctively of the Democratic party. And it satisfies me now to divide its existence into two eras, 1861 being the close of the first and the beginning of the second.

If it be true that political parties, like men, are good or bad according to their deeds, then, speaking judicially, I am bound to say that, while amenable to objections, the Democratic party was great and fairly representative of the American people during the first era of its life. Indeed, I am bound to go further, and say that, in my opinion, it was necessary to our country.

My Republican friends may be astonished at my liberality, and want explanation.

There were three events, each of infinite moment in shaping our affairs nationally, and each to be set down to the credit of the Democratic party. The first one was the purchase in 1802 of Louisiana from Napoleon. The movement was bitterly opposed by the Federalists. Nevertheless, Jefferson, supported by the Democracy in and out of Congress, succeeded. The amount paid was \$15,000,000. The advantages have since proven immeasurable. We obtained by it first the Mississippi river entire; next a stretch of country indefinitely vast came to us peaceably, and out of it we have since created the States of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Colorado, Nevada and Oregon, with five Territories remaining. In that day Napoleon was planning a French colonial dominion in the West, and he actually set about its achievement, beginning in St. Domingo. His second step was to have been in Louisiana. Talleyrand, writing by his inspiration said: "We shall find in the Indian tribes (adjacent to Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri) an army permanently cantoned in most convenient stations, endowed with skill and temper best adapted to the nature and the scene of the war (against the United States), and armed and impelled with far less trouble and expense than an equal number of our troops. * * * Such will be the power we will derive from a military station and a growing colony on the Mississippi." Could anything be more explicit? Imagine 30,000 Indians west of the river led by Frenchmen like Montcalm and Duquesne, and armed and supplied by France!

The second great deed to which I have referred was the war of 1812. England concluded our revolution, you will remember, by acknowledging our independence. She even embodied the acknowledgment in a formal treaty. Yet we were not free in fact. We wanted to engage in manufacturing and commerce. Europe was occupied with Napoleon; we were almost the only

neutrals; so that the time was favorable to our ambition. But the old enemy, true to his everlasting policy of holding the whole earth as a market to be supplied by him, and knowing perfectly the principle that no people can rival him in manufacturing for exportation except they be masters of a marine for carriage on their own account, repudiated the rights of neutrals as defined by the law of nations, boarded our ships on the high seas, and plundered them at pleasure; nor stopping there, he bore our seamen, native and foreign born, from their decks, and mustered them at his guns. At last the condition became intolerable. A war party asserted itself in Congress—Calhoun against John Randolph, Henry Clay against Josiah Quincy—the West and South against a faction in New England. James Madison, a Democratic President, approved and published the declaration of war. Then, for the first time, appeared the motto emblazoned on our flag—"Free Trade and Sailors' Rights." The free trade of that day, however, is not to be confounded with the free trade of the present. It meant, simply, as Madison and Perry understood it, the right of our people to send ships to sea, and that was all. The policy of levying duties upon imports for purposes of revenue and protection was not in the consideration. The end was glorious. Our real independence must be reckoned from the date of the treaty of Ghent, Dec. 24, 1814, not from Sept. 3, 1783, the date of the treaty of Paris, by which the revolutionary war was finished.

The third great event which I include in my reference was the war with Mexico. I am aware of the prejudice existing against that measure upon the part of many good and wise Americans. Still I insist that the war was inevitable—something bound to come—if not in 1846, then later. It was the logical consequence of the annexation of Texas. If the Rio Grande, a rushing torrent from its first fountains to its final plunge into the Gulf, is now a boundary line of difficult observance, what would the unsettled line terminal on the south by the Nueces have been? It is true that the motive of the Democratic majority in the annexation of Texas was indefensible. The extension of slavery cannot be separated from slavery; but after our government committed itself to the measure, the question changed; the soil became ours; we had to defend it; the people of Texas

became our people, and we had to defend them. In dealing with foreign powers, I reserve the right to oppose a policy down to the moment when the national sanction is attested by the national seal fixed fast to the proper document; then I am an American against the world. The unrighteousness of the policy disappears in the light of the stars upon the flag, and where the flag is ordered I am ready to go, though it be up the Thames to the heart of London. I followed it a soldier across the Rio Grande; and now, forty years after, I look upon the map, and in a vain effort to estimate in dollars and cents the value of California alone, I rest, thinking of the future that was secured. Slavery is dead, but the right of way between ocean and ocean survives, a fee-simple to our people forever.

These, I repeat, are the special glories of the Democratic party, and I call upon you to observe that they were all of occurrence during the first era.

Up to this point, at least, my Democratic friends cannot complain of me; and as, in what is to come, I shall try to be not less considerate of their feelings, let me hope to have their continued attention. This is the time for them to hear; the time for them to think of what they have heard, and to digest it, is when they are at home in the quiet of their families.

Did you never ask yourselves, my friends, why, with such mighty things as those I have mentioned to mark its history, there should have been a necessity for any other than the Democratic party? As a rule we send gratitude hand in hand with our public pride, so that he who does a deed or great good may count upon one day having a niche in his honor. The conspicuous exception is the case of General Grant. The city which undertook his monument stands dishonored by its failure. To make amends he has a memorial in every loyal heart.

Listen to me now. The Democratic party fell by as base a betrayal as is to be found in profane history. The mind of man cannot conceive of a fouler perversion than that to which it was subjected. True, it lives, and holds the government, but its grip is uncertain and feeble. There is no prophecy in saying that its days of usefulness are over, for the reason that the conspirators who worked upon its magnificent loyalty before are using it again,

and to the same end. And of that, my Democratic friends, it is now my business to tell you.

The space between our seaboards, east and west, is vastly wider than that between the lakes and the gulf. Its climates are different, and there are differences in the pursuits and business interests of its inhabitants; yet its inhabitants are one in affection for the Union. If so, why should there have been, why should there now be, a division between the North and the South? Why should that division have led down to the rebellion?

The man who lives by his own labor comes afterwhile to love his occupation; disliking to be disturbed in it, he grows patient and calculating, and to a degree submissive. Not so he who habitually derives his bread from the enforced toil of another man. He turns self-willed, impatient, haughty, tyrannical; and, afterwhile, when the enforced toil, a thing of inheritance, passes to succeeding generations, they exalt themselves into superior beings. That somebody should bring them their meat ready cooked and set it before them is of course. They exercise domination as of natural right. In their eyes labor is a sign of inferiority. The indisposition of the working man to be disturbed they take to be cowardice, and they say of the mechanic—"Hit him—use him—he is without spirit—he is only a mudsill." My fellow-citizens, this is the whole philosophy of our sectional differences North and South. The North built upon Free Labor; the South feasted, fattened, and made merry on Slave Labor. In course of time, by natural law, the inhabitants of the two sections grew apart into two peoples. They are two distinct peoples now—two peoples, with a terrible unsettled aggravation on the part of the South. My associates here (Mr. Johnston and Captain Hegler) will tell you when they come to speak, that the question of the hour is Protection or Free Trade. If they will allow the opinion, for the utterance of which nobody is responsible but myself, I tell you the issue to be decided next month—the issue to which all others are but incidents—is which of the two distinct peoples will be chosen as trustees of the government.

Now, my Democratic friend, if you had a supernumerary dog which you thought well of, but were called upon to give to one of two neighbors, I take it you would give it to him you thought most friendly to the brute. Wouldn't you? Is it possible you

care less for your government? If I am justified in thinking better of you than that, the point of consideration is, which of the peoples of the sections is the best friend to the government?

One sentence will dispose of the question as respects the majority in the North. They never struck a blow, nor fired a shot, except in defense of the Union—of such are the Republican party, and Benjamin Harrison. Can as much be said of the South? Let us see.

A moment ago, speaking of the necessity for another than the Democratic party, I said there would have been no such need had not the latter been wickedly betrayed. It is in order now to speak of that betrayal.

I will not dwell upon the rebellion. I am trying to be dispassionate—judicial, if you please—and would like to have you follow me in the same temper. So let pass its thousands fields of blood—its outlay of treasure—its debt yet upon us—its pension list, which, after all, is but a partial record of the men it left maimed and disease-struck, and of the widows and orphans of the dead—for your accommodation, my Democratic friend, and the sooner to get at my real argument, let the rebellion be treated as a tremendous, nightmare, a horror impossible except in the dream of a murderer who is to die in the morning, or of a leper asleep in his scabs. Who made it? To accuse you would be to accuse myself, for while it was hatching we were Democrats together. Your case was exactly mine. Before the war opened, we thought it would come. In anticipation of it, I studied military text-books and drilled a company for six years. In our eyes, Seward, Greeley, Garrison, and gentle singers like Whittier, the Quaker, were the unnaturals stirring the fire to fetch the hell-broth to a boil. They sent the “hymn-books” to Kansas, and old John Brown to Harper’s Ferry—so it seemed to us. And when Abe Lincoln, erected his gaunt body to its full height, said, shaking his bony finger in Douglas’s face—“A house divided against itself cannot stand”—we called to each other, “Now it is coming!” We passed the warning on, and were not afraid. Afraid? Of what? The old Democratic party was true. We saw it alert and ready, all its armor on—we saw the lion-heart on its shield, and in the center of the heart, the Constitution, an illuminated word of God. In this spirit we sat looking expect-

antly at the North. By and by the Charleston convention came on, and startled us. It ended with a division: part adjourned to Baltimore; then there were two candidates in the field. We were dazed by the procession of events that followed. Abe Lincoln was elected. A Cabinet officer from Virginia plundered the treasury; the navy was distributed over the seas; the contents of the arsenals were expressed South—all under Mr. Buchanan's eyes. Still we sat dazed. With farewells of defiance, Jeff Davis and a following of Southern Senators abandoned their seats in the Capitol. A convention was held at Montgomery, Ala.; another constitution was promulgated; the Fourth of July was abolished; a new flag adopted. Still we sat dazed, or if we went about, it was to ask, with chilly premonition, What is the meaning of it all? If a Republican answered, "Treason—war," we whistled to keep our courage up or tried to laugh at him. At last, from a girdle of batteries, a gun was fired at Fort Sumter. You remember the sound of that gun, my Democratic brother; in your field, on the highway, at home, wherever you were, you heard it—and then—well, speaking for myself, I heard it, and knew what it was—a call to arms. Then we came out of our dazement, and stood up, you—I—all of us, even the humblest man—knowing who began the rebellion—knowing upon whom history would eternally fasten it—knowing it was begun for Slavery—knowing that the Democratic party had been the victim of a conspiracy; that the lordly Southern barons had done their work secretly; that they had not consulted us of the rank and file in the North; that some body in our political household had assured them it was not necessary to consult us; that somebody had pledged a hundred thousand of us to hold the Republicans from crossing the Ohio river; that somebody had written for arms, that we might open a war here, and signalize our devotion to the party by making Indiana the twelfth Confederate State. You were innocent of the intent—so was I. We stood up, I say, knowing that we had been betrayed. None the less each of us was then summoned to choose between the North and South; and now to-day the same summons is upon us, the same choice offered us.

I pause here to beg that you will not misunderstand me. I am not saying that the South contemplates renewing the war. O no!

Why should it? By some madness of trust on the part of the North, some inscrutable decree of Providence, the engineers of the late Confederacy are in possession of the government: their scheme is now to hold it; and as they relied upon you to help them destroy it, they are relying upon you to help them farm it. The audacity of their reliance satisfies me that, in their opinion, we of the North are the hewers of wood they thought us in 1860. Neither am I saying what they will do with the government, if you help them to it. It is partly because we do not know their intentions, and partly because all the evidence they have furnished us is against their honesty of purpose, that I would dissuade you from trusting them further. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that within our generation they set up a government of their own, and fought four years to maintain it. Is that nothing now? In those four years the Union was in abeyance. Is that nothing? Is it something to be repeated? They surrendered with arms in their hands. Why should I not speak plainly? They became conquered enemies, and who of you has advices of the breaking of the millennium?

Hands were given us for defense; our reason was designed to enable us to anticipate danger. Let us use it, in this instance, to test the spirit of the South. Let us go out in search of proofs of their friendliness; so shall we determine their fitness or unfitness for the mighty trust they seek.

Since the rebellion closed, what one of their leaders has been heard to publicly recant his treason?

Are not the offices high and low now held by them the rewards of military service in the rebellion?

When the war closed there was a large emigration of Northern men to the South. Were not the emigrants villainously denominated, socially branded, and killed or run out?

You may say that these things were too directly after the war for the hot Southern blood to have cooled. Very well. It is now twenty-three years—nearly a quarter of a century—since the affair at Appomattox, and yet we are confronted by the Solid South, a new name for the old Confederacy, and which, because it is an organization, cannot be viewed as other than a menace. Trifling, do you think? With the help of three Northern States that organization elected the man it chose for President—aye, its

President. In Rome the other day the new German Emperor bent his knee to the Pope; that was nothing but ceremonial etiquette. Very different President Cleveland. He has been on his knees to the solid South ever since it nominated him. On his knees he ordered the return of the captured flags. On his knees he signed his pension vetoes.

Through the President the Solid South holds the sword of the Nation. With a majority in the House of Representatives, it is master of the national treasury. A bill was introduced into the House this session to refund to the States money raised from them by special tax in aid of the government during the war. The share due Indiana would have been over \$900,000. Forty and more members, all ex-confederates, banded together, held a dead-lock of days, and finally defeated the measure. The lesson is not the loss of money justly due us, but that they know their power.

The South is not permitting any lapse of war recollections. The cause may have been lost; strangely enough the Southern managers are doing many things which suggest studious effort on their part to keep its memory sacredly alive. Such is the testimony of their monuments; and nothing signifies separateness amongst peoples as positively as public memorials. You would no more look for a tomb of Napoleon in Trafalgar square than for a pillar to Nelson overhanging the Invalides. A soldier in bronze, mounted, booted, sworded, and in martial regalia, is an everlasting teacher; the generations are his scholars.

In localities the South is materially recovering from the effects of the war; its natural resources are undergoing development; it is beginning to feel the good effects of varied industries and free labor; withal, however, I do not hesitate to say, that if Northern capitalists were to abandon the enterprises begun by them in those localities, the whole broad section would within three years return to its wrecked condition of 1865. Every Southerner must know that; upon what theory, then, consistent with friendly intention, can you, my Democratic friend, explain the fact that every representative Southern politician is a free-trader? One would think members of Congress from districts in which furnaces and factories have been established would be keenly alive to protecting them by duties upon foreign competitors; but it is not

so. To find the true reason for this amazing circumstance, you will have to look under the surface, and when found it will be identical with the reason of the prohibition of duties in the Confederate constitution. The men who adopted that constitution, and the men who represent the Solid South in Congress, were born and brought up on Slave Labor: in their eyes a slave is a worthier object of respect than a mechanic; with their three great products—sugar, rice and cotton—they could buy any manufactured article of which they had need: consequently they looked the world over with but one demand—who will furnish us goods at the cheapest rates? Do you flatter yourself they care more for the condition of factory operatives than they did in the old plantation days? They have the negro yet; his average of daily wages does not exceed 30 cents; and, most significant of all, they still have the exclusive production of sugar, cotton and rice, of which, under the Mills bill, sugar is dutiable at the rate of 68 cents and rice 100 cents. O purblind friend, not to see that your agriculture does not interfere with theirs; that when they have destroyed your industries, by opening the gates to foreigners, they will be the lords they used to be, and you the doted mudsills they used to think you! Slavery plays no part in the motive. The condition of the negro now is better for their purposes than when he was a chattel—he must maintain himself—he costs them nothing. In short, the Free Trade of the South is aimed at the Free Labor of the North; giving them the government is giving the great American market to England, and you—when the transfer is completely effected, in the bottom of a beggar's purse you will find the price paid you for helping them in this part of their conspiracy!

I care now to consider but one other question in the connection—How nearly has the solid South come to mastering the government? And what manifestations of good will has it left on the way? We calculate the performance of a ship by knots, of a locomotive by miles, of a horse by minutes and seconds. Unfortunately, the inquiry I am putting cannot be gauged by such measurements; it can only be reached by deduction from circumstances, and it is only as the circumstances are known and determinable facts that we can assure ourselves of certainty in the investigation.

The Territory of Dakota covers an area in square miles four times that of Indiana; its population is over 700,000; of whites, it has over 50 per cent. more than Mississippi, 50 per cent. more than Louisiana, and nearly double that of South Carolina. The ten Democratic Representatives of Georgia received a total of 20,482 votes. Dakota has more than six times that number; yet she cannot get a place in the Union of States. Who keeps her outside? What is the motive? Her people have been knocking at the gates for years. They are intelligent, industrious, able. The majority of them went forth from these upper-Mississippi States, taking with them our habits, modes, and ideas. My Democratic friend, they are of your likeness bodily and spiritually, and guilty of no offense. Had they raised their hands against the Union, could they be counted upon as faithful allies of those who did attempt to destroy it, they would have been admitted long ago. As a State Dakota would seat in Congress two Republican Senators. There you have their offending. No deep-sea sounding here; you have only to look over the shady side of the ship, and see the motive black in the shallows below. The Presidency belongs to the Solid South; the House belongs to it; give it two Senators more, and American right will become of no consequence, though it have the sanction of an hundred years, with countless precedents. It is easier to keep 300,000 loyal men voiceless than it is to kill them. Who knows that better than the Solid South? In a word, it is near enough to absolute mastery of the government to dare disfranchise the 700,000 people of Dakota.

The lesson in history which has always made the strongest impression upon me is that there has never been a republic that did not die before the people knew it was in danger. We in America have been accustomed to believe that as long as the Constitution is observed our government is safe. Tell me, my Democratic friend, is not that so? Well, as calmly as I can state a circumstance of such import, and that you may never plead ignorance or want of notice, I tell you that the Constitution is now a nullity in the South, and has been for years. Do not consider me as threatening a calamity to come. I speak of what is. A Southern, though steeped in treason from head to heel, though he have led armies in rebellion, can come into any Northern State, live there long enough to attain citizenship, and vote without

challenge. How is it under the domination of the Solid South with respect to us of the North? There are States—observe that I speak in the plural—in which the majority, so far as expression of political opinion is concerned, go about with gags in their mouths; as to expression at the polls, they might as well be worms under foot in rotted coffins. “Negroes,” you say. Not entirely; there are thousands of white men among them; but grant the discrimination—those negroes are citizens, and in their residences voters exactly as you are voters here. Shall I stop now to lecture you about the origin of the right of suffrage, and what all, under our form of government, depends upon its free and uninterrupted exercise? God forbid! If you have yet to be taught in that department, you will not believe, though an angel of grace came to tell it to you, that we are already far advanced on the road to another rebellion. In the first place, it is not true that color has to do with the suppression of the majority in those States; for if negroes will vote the ticket their masters give them, called by courtesy the Democratic ticket, they are welcome at the polls, and their ballots are faithfully counted. But they will not. They know instinctively that to do so is to reinforce the iron plates already on the doors of their exclusion. In the next place, in learning the alphabet, they carry off with them the lesson that as there is a first letter and a last one, so there is a highest position and one the lowest in society; in teaching them to read, you quicken the sensibility of their souls to the pleasures and delights of liberty; to keep organized against them, is to reveal to them afterwhile the power there is in organization. Killing them is but instructing them how to kill. Events travel fast in these days. The avengers of wronged peoples do not always bear the name of Moses. In one age, we had Washington; in another Lincoln; and I do not think it straining the imagination to believe that in a public school somewhere in the land there is a black man bending over his desk, taking on mind and soul to lead his race up to perfected freedom. A few days ago a United States Senator from the Solid South boldly defended the policy of forcible exclusion. My reply to him is simply, “Sir, it would be safer for you to kill your colored constituents while you have the power.” What is the offense of the disfranchised majority

in those States? Exactly the offense of the disfranchised people of Dakota—they are Republicans. In a word, the Solid South is so nearly master of the government that it dares nullify the Constitution of the Nation, and then ask tauntingly, What are you going to do about it?

After all, however, probably the best way to reach the point in hand is by inquiring what the Solid South has yet to do before it completely pockets the government. Given two Senators more, then there remain between them and their prey but four men whose terms of life, as defined by the Psalmist, are already run. In other words, four of the judges of the Supreme Court are reasonably sure to superannuate and retire or die within the next administration. Are you willing the Solid South shall dictate the appointment of their successors? Consider before you commit yourself. All the conditions under the latest constitutional amendments have been settled by the present court; yet their decisions are open to rehearing and reversal. Ponder the confusion that would follow such a step. I can scarcely imagine a greater calamity. To want those amendments wiped out or even seriously disturbed looks like wanting the war re-opened in more dreadful form than ever—an unchaining of Satan himself. In that day God help you!—God help us all!

Let me conclude now. I hope I have not said anything personally offensive to you, my old Democratic friends. I certainly have not meant to do so. It seemed to me a good time to tell you why, long ago, I quit being a Democrat. Recognizing that the conspirators of 1861 betrayed the party, recognizing that they were trying to use it for the destruction of the Union, along with Douglas, Logan and Grant, not to speak of the thousands of others who might be named, I broke away from them. Is it not time for you to do so? Do not say to yourselves that the Confederacy is dead; it lives, not merely in spirit, but organized and active; its new name is the Solid South. How much longer can you consent to be its voluntary servants? Its grasp is upon your shoulders; shake it off, and prove your equality in understanding and courage. If you think it deserving your sympathy and gratitude, vote for Grover Cleveland; on the other hand, if you have the slightest doubt of the honesty of its intentions, if you would certainly save your government for yourselves and your children, then vote for Benjamin Harrison.

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